

130.330

Fall 2014

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Gilman 144

## The Garden of Eden

Students are expected to attend regularly, to do the required reading, and to come to class prepared to address the topics on the syllabus. Students will set up a blog (e.g. @blogspot.com or wordpress.org) and post a short response to each reading before class, using the suggestions on the syllabus as a guide. Set privacy settings and email me the address.

Grades will be based primarily on preparation for and participation in class and on written work. Option: email for appointment to discuss your progress.

### Required Text:

Kristen Kvam, Linda Schearing and Valarie Ziegler, *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). Bring book to all classes.

All other readings are on electronic reserve or online as noted.

### Assignment perpetuum:

When reading each interpretation:

- 1) *Connect* the interpretation with the biblical story.
- 2) *Assess* whether the interpretation contradicts the biblical version.

Note where each interpretation adds to the story and try to figure out the assumptions that lie behind reading the story this way. Ask yourself how each one shifts the emphasis or introduces a new meaning or dimension to the story. Then ask yourself if that new meaning is really consistent with the story as a whole and in its particulars.

## I. Reading the text

Tuesday, September 2 The real (biblical) story vs. the story we (think we) know

Read Genesis 2:4-3:24 (in any translation; for a choice, see biblegateway.com).

a) As you read, compare the Garden of Eden story in Gen 2:4-3:24 to your own. Note the parts you sort of remembered but didn't put in your version, and whatever came as a complete surprise. Also note what you put into the biblical story that isn't actually there. In addition to the blog, bring these notes to class for discussion.

b) Reread the story slowly and write down what questions are left open in the narrative. Find at least five. Note one item that really puzzled you.

Thursday, September 4 Getting to know the story

Open Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 in separate windows. Compare and contrast the two texts. What are the differences between the creation stories in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2-3? Cite chapter and verse (e.g. Gen 1:26). Read as deeply as you can. Be as comprehensive as possible. In addition to the blog, bring your work to class for discussion, as well as a translation of Gen 1-3 (any one on internet).

Tuesday, September 9 The Garden of Eden story as etiology

Creation stories are tales of origin, explaining how our world came to be.

Reread Genesis 2-3 (any translation). As you read, list (with biblical verse citations) all the aspects of our world that the author of the story chose to explain.

Ponder whether the story explains why we die. We will have a classroom debate on whether the human beings created in the Garden of Eden were originally mortal or immortal. Every student will tackle both sides, using every detail in the story to argue each side of the issue.

Thursday, September 11 Issues in translation

Assignment: On bible gateway.com, compare two translations: New King James Version, Revised Standard Version.

Find one example of a difference that makes a difference.

Bring to class a copy of the translation in course content on Blackboard.

Tuesday, September 16 Sex in the Garden

a) Reread Genesis 1:1-4:1.

Where do you find references to sex?

b) Read *Eve and Adam* 77 (Gen Rab 8:1); 78 (Gen Rab 18:4); 82 (Nid 31b bottom of page); 83 (Yeb. 63a top of page, Gen Rab 17:2); 85-86 (Gen. Rab. 20:4; 18:6: Sotah 9b); 88 (Yeb 103b); 89 (Gen. Rab. 19:3); 93 (Gen. Rab. 20:7); 107 (Targum Ps-J: Gen 4:1-2; 5:1-3).

Where did the rabbis in early Judaism find sex in the story? How did they tie in their remarks to the text of Genesis (give a few examples)?

Thursday, September 18 The snake

Reread Genesis 2-3 carefully. Determine whether *according to the biblical story* the snake was lying or spoke the truth. Consider the entire story and come prepared to cite chapter and verse in your analysis of the text.

Tuesday, September 23 Adam and Eve in the New Testament

Read the 'assignment perpetuum' on the first page of the syllabus and refer to it for all future readings.

Read *Eve and Adam* 117-119; additional New Testament readings on e-reserve.

Find the references to the Garden of Eden story in these NT passages. How is Genesis 2-3 being used? What's new in the interpretation of the story?

Ponder for discussion: What's happening to gender relations? To sexuality? To attitudes toward women? What has any of this got to do with the story of Adam and Eve? Why does it matter?

Thursday, September 25 Allegorical interpretation: Philo and Origen

1) What are the characteristics of an allegory?

2) Then read: Aristotle, *Politics* Book 1, chap. 5 1254b. (e-reserve).

Philo, *On the Creation of the Cosmos* 134; 151-52; 163 (e-reserve).

*Eve and Adam* 65 (1.37 on Gen 3:6); 66 (1.45 on Gen 3:9; 1.49 on Gen 3:16).

Origen, *Eve and Adam* 133-34 (Homily I 15).

According to Philo's allegorical interpretation, what happened in the Garden of Eden?

Tuesday, September 30 Augustine and original sin

1) *Eve and Adam* 147-54.

Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. II, Book Eleven, chapters 31-32.

Explain Augustine's view of the consequences of the transgression.

2) *Eve and Adam* 80 (Ber. 61a); 98 (Gen Rab 23:5).

What is the Jewish view of the source of evil expressed in the midrash?

Thursday, October 2 Demonization of women

Testament of Reuben 5:1-6:3 (e-reserve).

*Eve and Adam* 94 (Gen Rab 17:8); 131-132 (Tertullian); 241-248 (*Malleus Maleficarum*)

What interpretations of Gen 2-3 form the basis for these texts?

Tuesday, October 7 Medieval Philosophy I: Thomas Aquinas

The Summa Theologica can be accessed at: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>

Each student will present one 'article' to the class, emphasizing the nature of the argument and the use of Genesis 2-3 within the argument.

For the blog: Outline the structure of Aquinas' articles.

Use Part I Question 92 Article 1 (*Eve and Adam* 226-227) as a model.

Thursday, October 9 Medieval Philosophy II: Maimonides and Nachmanides

*Eve and Adam* 213-214 (Nachmanides on Gen 2:9); 216-218 (Maimonides, on Gen 3.5).

Read carefully. What is the 'knowledge of good and evil' in each? What have you been assuming about it? What indications are given in Genesis 2-3?

Tuesday, October 14 The First Eve and Lilith

a) Lilith

*Eve and Adam* 78 (Eve I and II); 204 (Alphabet of Ben Sira); 207 (Chronicles of Jerahmeel chap. 23); 422-425 (Plaskow).

How do the Alphabet of Ben Sira (204) and Plaskow (422-425) interpret and expand upon Genesis 2-3?

b) Jewish mysticism: Lilith and Samael

Background: *Eve and Adam* 107 (Targum Ps-J: Gen 4:1-2; 5:1-3); 205 (Pirke de R. Eliezer, chap. 13); 207 (Pirke de R. Eliezer, chaps. 21-22).

Medieval mysticism: (just skim to get the flavor): 220-222 (Kohen); 222-225 (Zohar).

Tuesday, October 21 The Protestant Reformation: Martin Luther and John Calvin  
*Eve and Adam* 267-275; 276-281.

For Luther and Calvin both man and woman were created in the image of God. How then do they account for their disobedience?

What are the effects of the events in Genesis 3 on human relations?

Thursday, October 23 *Paradise Lost*

*Eve and Adam* 288-304 and online or in the library. Read in posted order.

Go back to the first assignment, the list you made of questions about the narrative, and see which ones Milton answers and how.

How does Milton's version affect how you think of the characters?

Come prepared with examples from the poem.

Tuesday, October 28 Visual representations of the Garden of Eden story

II. Using biblical interpretation in social policy

Thursday, October 30 Social applications I: The Shakers and the Oneida Community  
*Eve and Adam* 356-368.

What assumptions are made by the representatives of each group and how do these relate to Genesis 2-3? Why use the story to shape a society?

Tuesday, November 4 Social applications II: race relations

*Eve and Adam* 207; 310-315; 323-339.

The story of Adam and Eve was appropriated in the struggles for and against slavery. Each student will be responsible for leading a discussion on one of these texts, outlining how Genesis 2-3 is being used in the argument.

\*Thursday, November 6 Meet in MSE Library, Special Collections (M-Level)

Tuesday, November 11 The Qur'an and Modern Islam

1) *Eve and Adam* 179-184; *Eve and Adam* 413-419; 464-475.

2) Geraldine Brooks, *Nine Parts of Desire* 77-90 (e-reserve).

Outline the version of the Garden of Eden story presented in the Qur'an.  
How is the story used in modern arguments on women in Islam?

Thursday, November 13 Social applications III: gender relations

"Eve Was Framed": Sarah Grimké and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Women's Bible*  
*Eve and Adam* 340-356.

What is new in Stanton's interpretation and in her attitude towards the text?

Tuesday, November 18 Modern Judaism: the issue of marriage and gay marriage

- 1) *Eve and Adam* 401-13.
- 2) M. Coogan, *God and Sex* 61-98; 117-140 (e-reserve).
- 3) M. Potts and R. Short, *Ever Since Adam and Eve* (Cambridge, 1999) 24-42; 106-112 (e-reserve).
- 4) [optional and extremely irreverent] Betty Bowers Explains Traditional Marriage to Everyone Else (Youtube)

Genesis 1-3 is the foundation for current debates on laws defining and

"protecting" marriage. How does current understanding of the evolution of human sexuality compare with the current arguments about marriage?

In your reading, is Gen 2:24 an etiology of marriage or sexual desire or neither?

Thursday, November 20 Modern Christianity: male supremacy vs. gender equality

Foh: *Eve and Adam*, 390-95 (stop after 1 Timothy); 398-400.

Outline and evaluate *in excruciating detail* each of the arguments in Foh's interpretation of Genesis 1-3.

Phyllis Trible, *Eve and Adam* 431-37.

Outline and evaluate *in excruciating detail* each of the arguments in Trible's interpretation.

Tuesday, December 2 Modern Christianity: Christian Identity movements

*Eve and Adam* 483-502.

Chester Quarles, *Christian Identity* (2004) 66-127 (on e-reserve).

Thursday, December 4 The Garden of Eden today

What contemporary issues and scientific questions involve the Garden of Eden story?